

Message Text

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TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4135
DEPT OF DEFENSE WASH DC
INFO CMDT NWC WASH DC

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SUBJ: VISIT OF NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE FAR EAST STUDY GROUP

1. SIXTEEN STUDENTS, THREE FACULTY MEMBERS AND TWO ADMINISTRATIVE PERSONNEL OF THE FAR EAST STUDY GROUP OF THE U.S. NATIONAL WAR COLLEGE (NWC), VISITED THAILAND FROM 30 APRIL TO 3 MAY 1975. THE NWC GROUP WAS LED BY MR. SEYMOUR I. NADLER, FSIO-2, USIA AND CONSISTED OF EIGHT CIVILIAN OFFICERS AND OFFICIALS FROM STATE DEPARTMENT AND DOD, AND THIRTEEN U.S. MILITARY OFFICERS. THE GROUP ARRIVED BY MILITARY AIR TRANSPORTATION FROM JAKARTA, INDONESIA ON THE AFTERNOON OF WEDNESDAY, 30 APRIL. THEY WERE MET AT DON MUANG BY AIR VICE MARSHAL CHUMSAI EKACHANT, DEPUTY SUPERINTENDENT OF THE ROYAL THAI NATIONAL DEFENSE COLLEGE (NDC), MEMBERS OF THE NDC STAFF, AND AMEMB REPRESENTATIVES. THE GROUP WAS THEN ESCORTED TO THE CHAO PHYA HOTEL, WHERE THEY WERE BILLETED THROUGHOUT THE VISIT.

2. ON WEDNESDAY EVENING, 30 APRIL, THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES A.I. (CDA) HOSTED A RECEPTION FOR THE NWC GROUP AT THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE. THE RECEPTION, WHICH WAS ALSO ATTENDED BY PRINCIPAL MEMBERS OF THE COUNTRY TEAM, CONSISTED OF A BRIEFING BY THE CDA AND SELECTED SENIOR MEMBERS OF THE COUNTRY TEAM, FOLLOWED BY A SPIRITED QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD. IN HIS REMARKS THE CDA DISCUSSED THE BACKGROUND OF U.S.-THAI RELATIONS, CURRENT ISSUES
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OF IMPORTANCE IN RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO COUNTRIES, AND OFFERED

SOME OBSERVATIONS ON THE DIRECTION OF FUTURE U.S. RELATIONS WITH THE RTG. THIS PRESENTATION WAS FOLLOWED BY THOSE OF THE ADCM, AND THE REMARKS OF PRINCIPAL U.S. MISSION OFFICERS WHICH FOCUSED ON POLITICAL, ECONOMIC, MILITARY AND SOCIAL ISSUES OF IMPORTANCE TO THAILAND AND TO U.S.-THAI RELATIONS. AFTER THE BRIEFINGS, THE NWC STUDENTS AND COUNTRY TEAM MEMBERS ENGAGED IN A WIDE-RANGING QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD.

3. FOLLOWING THE ACTIVITIES AT THE AMBASSADOR'S RESIDENCE, SEVERAL MEMBERS OF THE COUNTRY TEAM HOSTED DINNERS FOR SMALL GROUPS OF NWC FACULTY MEMBERS AND STUDENTS. THE DINNER GUESTS COMPRISED A BROAD SPECTRUM OF U.S. AND THAI OFFICIALS, AND PROVIDED A VALUABLE OPPORTUNITY FOR THE NWC STUDENTS TO ENGAGE IN DISCUSSIONS WITH THAI GUESTS IN AN INFORMAL ATMOSPHERE.

4. ON THURSDAY MORNING, 1 MAY, THE VISITING NWC GROUP WAS RECEIVED BY LT GEN GHAVENG YOUNGCHAROEN, SUPERINTENDANT, ROYAL THAI NATIONAL DEFENSE COLLEGE (RTNDC). ON BEHALF OF THE RTG, THE RTNDC TRADITIONALLY SPONSORS THE NWC VISITS TO THAILAND. LT GEN CHAVENG WELCOMED THE NWC GROUP WITH CHARACTERISTIC WARMTH AND GOOD HUMOR AND ESTABLISHED A RELATIONSHIP OF SINCERE HOSPITALITY WHICH PREVAILED THROUGHOUT THE REMAINDER OF THE TRIP.

5. THE NWC GROUP PROCEEDED FROM THE RTNDC TO GOVERNMENT HOUSE, WHERE THEY MET WITH PRIME MINISTER KUKRIT PRAMOJ. THIS MEETING WAS THE HIGHLIGHT OF THE VISIT AND THE CDA, AND ALUMNUS OF THE NWC CLASS OF 1964, ACCOMPANIED THE GROUP ON THIS CALL. THIS OCCASION PROVIDED THE NWC GROUP MEMBERS WITH AN OPPORTUNITY FOR A CANDID, UNRESTRICTED QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD WITH THE PM WHICH LASTED ALMOST ONE HOUR. PM KUKRIT USED THE NWC VISIT AS A FORUM (MEDIA REPORTERS WERE PRESENT) TO STATE CERTAIN VIEWS OF THAI DOMESTIC AND FOREIGN POLICY. ON DOMESTIC MATTERS, PM KUKRIT CITED THREE WARS THAT THE THAI ARE FACING: ON POVERTY, AGAINST THE INSURGENCY, AND PERHAPS COUNTERING AN EXTERNAL THREAT. HE STATED THAT THE PRINCIPAL GOAL OF HIS GOVERNMENT IS TO IMPROVE THE LOT OF THE FARMERS, PRIMARILY BY REDUCING THEIR INDEBTEDNESS THROUGH REDIRECTION OF THE RICE EXPORT TAX REVENUES AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT FINANCED BY DIRECT GOVERNMENT GRANTS TO CANTON COUNCILS. THE PM ALSO STRESSED THE IMPORTANCE OF THE MONARCHY AS A UNIFYING, PROGRESSIVE AND STABILIZING INSTITUTION. IN REGARD TO FOREIGN LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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AFFAIRS, THE PM REPEATED THE OFT STATED POLICY THAT THAILAND DESIRES PEACEFUL RELATIONS WITH ALL COUNTRIES REGARDLESS OF THE NATURE OF THEIR INTERNAL POLITICAL SYSTEMS AND THAT HE WOULD LIKE TO SEE ASEAN EXPANDED TO INCLUDE BURMA AND INDO CHINA. ON THE MATTER OF RECOGNITION OF THE NEW GOVERNMENT IN SAIGON, THE PM STATES THAT THIS WOULD NOT BE RUSHED, THAT PROPER TIMING IS IMPORTANT, AND IN ANY CASE RECOGNITION WOULD FOLLOW CONSULTATIONS WITH THE OTHER FOUR ASEAN NATIONS. PM KUKRIT WAS THE FIRST INTER-

VIEWEE TO INTRODUCE A THEME WHICH WAS OFTEN RESTATED DURING THE REST OF THE NWC INTERVIEWS: THAI FOREIGN POLICY IS STILL LINKED TO U.S. FOREIGN POLICY, PARTICULARLY IN MATTERS THAT PERTAIN TO THAI SECURITY; HOWEVER SINCE U.S. FOREIGN POLICY IS NO LONGER CLEAR TO THE THAI, THE THAI FIND IT VERY DIFFICULT TO BE DEFINITIVE IN THEIR STATEMENTS OF INTENTIONS ON FUTURE RELATIONS WITH THE U.S. FINALLY, WITH RESPECT TO THE THAI PERCEPTION OF NORTH VIETNAMESE INTENTIONS TOWARD THAILAND, THE PM INDICATED THAT DRVN INTENTIONS CANNOT AND SHOULD NOT BE PRESUMED. RATHER, A DIALOGUE MUST BE ESTABLISHED AND FUTURE ACTIONS JUDGED IN LIGHT OF FUTURE CIRCUMSTANCES. THE FACT THAT THE NWC WAS ALLOWED TO INTERVIEW THE PM AND THE INFORMAL, UNRESTRICTED NATURE OF THE INTERVIEW MAY BE ATTRIBUTABLE TO THIS POLITICIAN'S ENJOYMENT OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO ADDRESS A FRIENDLY AUDIENCE OR USE OF THE OPPORTUNITY TO BE SHOWN IN MEDIA COVERAGE ADVANCING HIS COUNTRY'S POSITION IN THE PRESENCE OF THE AMERICAN CHARGE'.

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ACTION EA-10

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6. GEN SAIYUD KERDPHON HOSTED THE NWC GROUP AT A BRIEFING AND DISCUSSION AT THE INTERNAL SECURITY OPERATIONS COMMAND (ISOC). SUBJECTS COVERED INCLUDED THE HISTORY AND NATURE OF THE INSURGENCY THREAT; THE ORGANIZATION AND FUNCTIONS OF ISOC, THE OVERALL RTG COUNTERINSURGENCY PROGRAM, THE CURRENT SITUATION AND FUTURE PROSPECTS

.
DURING THE QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD GEN SAIYUD STRESSED TWO PERTINENT POINTS. HE APPEARED GENUINELY DISTRESSED AT THE U.S. FAILURE IN AND FINAL "ABANDONMENT" OF SOUTH VIETNAM. SECOND, HE

STATED THAT UNLESS THE BANGKOK ORIENTED GOVERNMENT TAKES EFFECTIVE STEPS TO WIN THE ALLEGIANCE OF THE THAI RURAL POPULATION, THE SUCCESS OF THE INSURGENCY IN WINNING THAT ALLEGIANCE IS ASSURED. FOLLOWING THE FORMAL BRIEFING AND DISCUSSIONS GEN SAIYUD HOSTED A LUNCH FOR THE NWC GROUP WHICH ALLOWED DISCUSSIONS AMONG THE NWC STUDENTS AND ISOC RTA STAFF MEMBERS.

7. ON THURSDAY AFTERNOON, 1 MAY, THE NWC VISITED THE GRAND PALACE AND WAT PHRA KEW. THE NDC ARRANGED A DETAILED GUIDED TOUR OF THE PALACE AND WAT, DURING WHICH THE STUDENTS RECEIVED AN EXPLANATION OF THE BACKGROUND FROM WHICH THE THAI BUDDHIST RELIGIOUS AND SECULAR CULTURE DEVELOPED AND AN OUTLINE OF SOME OF THE RESULTING CULTURE TRAITS.

8. AFTER A MUCH APPRECIATED FREE EVENING ON THURSDAY, THE NWC GROUP BEGAN FRIDAY'S SCHEDULE WITH A VISIT TO THE MINISTRY OF DEFENSE
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WHERE THEY WERE RECEIVED BY ADMIRAL KAMON SITAKALIN, DEPUTY MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND FORMER CINC OF THE RTN. ADMIRAL KAMON RESPONDED TO THE QUESTIONS OF THE NWC GROUP CANDIDLY IN ALL CASES IN WHICH HE CHOSE TO ANSWER, BUT DEMURRED TO GEN CHAROEN PONGPANICH ON SEVERAL QUESTIONS DEALING WITH FUTURE RELATIONS AMONG THAILAND, THE U.S., AND THAILAND'S REGIONAL NEIGHBORS. GEN CHAROEN WAS RECENTLY PROMOTED AND ASSIGNED AS THE DEPUTY CHIEF OF STAFF, SUPREME COMMAND HEADQUARTERS AFTER A LONG TENURE AS THE J-2 SUPREME COMMAND HEADQUARTERS.

9. THE NWC GROUP SUBSEQUENTLY HAD AN OPPORTUNITY FOR AN INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL KRIANGSAK CHOMANAN, CHIEF OF STAFF OF THE ROYAL THAI ARMED FORCES. GENERAL KRIANGSAK'S COMMENTS IN RESPONSE TO NWC STUDENT QUESTIONS WERE STRAIGHTFORWARD AND INCISIVE. GEN KRIANGSAK DISCUSSED EFFORTS BY THE RGA TO COMBAT THE INSURGENCY AND DESCRIBED THE PROBLEMS OF FITTING LIMITED RESOURCES TO A WIDE-SPREAD LOW-LEVEL THREAT. HE EMPHASIZED THE IMPORTANCE OF PSYCHOLOGICAL WARFARE AS A WEAPON FOR BOTH SIDES. IN REGARD TO SECURITY ASSISTANCE, GEN KRIANGSAK STATED THAT AID IN THE FORM OF EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES FROM THE U.S. WOULD BE WELCOMED, BUT THAT A LARGE AMERICAN PRESENCE AND ADVISORY EFFORT IS NOT NECESSARY ANY LONGER: THE THAI ARMED FORCES ARE CAPABLE OF CONDUCTING THEIR OWN TRAINING AND OPERATIONS. A CORNERSTONE OF THIS SELF-SUFFICIENCY, IN THE GENERAL'S VIEW, IS THE NECESSITY TO FIGHT THE INSURGENCY AT THE INSURGENT'S LEVEL AND AVOID OVER-SOPHISTICATION IN PROGRAMS AND EQUIPMENT. HIS EMPHASIS WAS THAT IT IS DIFFICULT TO UNDERSTAND WHY MIL AID TO RTG HAS BEEN SUBSTANTIALLY REDUCED WHEN THAILAND HAS BECOME THE FRONT LINE OF DEFENSE AGAINST ASIAN COMMUNISM.

10. DURING THE AFTERNOON OF FRIDAY, 2 MAY, THE NWC GROUP VISITED WITH THE FOREIGN MINISTER, H.E. MGEN CHATICHAI CHOONHAVAN. THE FOREIGN MINISTER GATHERED THE NWC GROUP AROUND HIM IN AN INFORMAL,

UNRESTRICTED QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD WHICH COVERED U.S.-THAI RELATIONS, THE RECENT SHIFT IN THAI FOREIGN POLICY, FUTURE THAI RELATIONS WITH THE PRC, DRVN AND CAMBODIA. FOLLOWING THE THIRTY MINUTE QUESTION AND ANSWER PERIOD THE NWC GROUP CONDUCTED SMALL GROUP DISCUSSIONS WITH FIVE OF THE FOREIGN MINISTER'S KEY SUB-ORDINATES FOR ALMOST FORTY-FIVE MINUTES. THE CONTENT OF THESE DISCUSSIONS RANGED OVER THE FULL SPECTRUM OF TOPICS OF INTEREST TO THE NWC GROUP.

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11. ON FRIDAY EVENING THE NDC HOSTED COCKTAILS AND DINNER FOR THE NWC GROUP AT A BANGKOK RESTAURANT WHERE THE GROUP ENJOYED TYPICAL THAI FOOD AND A PROGRAM OF THAI MUSIC AND CLASSICAL DANCING. THE DINNER PROVIDED ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY FOR INFORMAL DISCUSSIONS WITH SENIOR MILITARY OFFICERS OF THE RTNDC.

12. THE NWC GROUP DEPARTED DON MUANG BY MILITARY AIR TRANSPORTATION EARLY IN THE MORNING ON SATURDAY, 3 MAY.

13. ADDRESSEES ARE ASKED TO CONSIDER THE NWC NON-ATTRIBUTION POLICY IN MAKING USE OF INFORMATION CONTAINED IN THIS MESSAGE. IN THE CASE OF NWC INTERVIEWS WITH PM KUKRIT, ADM KAMON, AND GEN SAIYUD TELEVISION CAMERAMEN AND REPORTERS WERE PRESENT DURING ALL OR PORTIONS OF THE INTERVIEWS.

14. AMEMB BANGKOK ENJOYED HOSTING THE NWC FAR EAST STUDY GROUP. WE ARE LOOKING FORWARD TO NEXT YEARS VISIT BY THE NWC FAR EAST STUDY GROUP.
MASTERS

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